

Jade Garrett
ECI 430: October, 2012
Paul Harvey Final

A Child of September 11

A lover of watching football with his father and supporting the New York Giants, Corbin was a pretty normal 11-year-old boy. A lot of his nights consisted of staying up as late as his parents would let him to watch his favorite team throw the pigskin down a perfectly painted field. On a particularly important game night, the Giants were playing the Denver Broncos at Mile High Stadium on “NFL Monday Night Football”. Since the game was on primetime in Denver, it was ending significantly later on the east coast in Corbin’s New Jersey home. Although an extremely exciting and close game, Corbin knew that he wasn’t going to get to see the ending of it. While Corbin’s father loved spending time with him watching their favorite team play, their hopefulness and anticipation couldn’t permit Corbin to stay up past his bedtime. His father escorted him to his bed before the game was over because he had to be awake for school early the next morning.

When Corbin did wake up for school, his father had already gone to work. Curious about the outcome of the football game, he searched the house for any trace of the final score. Corbin had known his dad to leave scores for him if he couldn’t finish watching a game, and he was sure that his dad would have done the same for last night’s Giants v Broncos game. Sure enough, Corbin found a note with the final score of the football game on it on their kitchen counter, Giants 20 and Broncos 31.

Before school, Corbin was as sad as any kid whose favorite team had just lost an exciting game, but he continued on with his day. He wasn’t aware of how much he’d come to cherish that sheet of paper with the football scores on it, but at the time, he didn’t think any differently than

any other day when his dad left football scores for him. Once he was at school an hour or so that morning, students were talking about rumors of something bad happening in the city, but nobody knew exactly what. Like most of the other children, Corbin soon grew especially concerned because a lot of his classmates were being picked up early from school and many of their parents were crying. However, the confusion heightened because the administrators didn't tell the students about what was going on.

Corbin's neighborhood drew many families in because of its convenience to New York City. Many of the families in the neighborhood had at least one member who made the fairly short commute into New York City daily for their job. However, this convenience became "a representation of fatality" on September 11th when a tragedy struck America and there was a terrorist attack on the United States. Corbin began to realize that a lot of the students who were being pulled out of school early were not only his classmates but also his neighbors.

The day dragged on and Corbin wasn't called to the office for early dismissal as so many others were. Without any confirmation of the rumors, his emotions of anxiety grew and he awaited the end of the school day as calmly as he could. At the end of the day, one of Corbin's classmates said that he overheard a lady in the main school office say that something had happened to the World Trade Center. Corbin knew that his father worked in one of the World Trade Center buildings, and he immediately began to worry about his father's safety. He also heard that a bomb had gone off in the building and his concern grew as he started to make the trip to his house.

Corbin met his mother on the front steps of their home. She was nearly speechless and let the television do most of the talking. As they went inside, Corbin began to realize the truth to the rumors he heard at school. As he watched the buildings fall in New York City and planes crash

into the Pentagon, he realized that the truth was much worse than what the rumors at school had led him to imagine. He also witnessed President Bush announce the events as a terrorist attack on the country.

Corbin's father, Robert Mayo, was a deputy fire safety director for the World Trade Center. Corbin's mother spoke to Robert on the phone at about 9:30 am, right after the attacks and begged for him to get on the ferry home as many others were doing to get out of the city and its turmoil. Robert told his wife that he would speak to her later and they hung up. That was the last time they spoke to each other. Corbin's father died in the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. In the weeks past, Corbin tried calling his dad's cell phone over and over, hoping that he was still alive. The fact that his body wasn't recovered until later in the fall created a great uncertainty for Corbin during the months of searching. The finding of his body was the undeniable proof of his death, and Corbin finally began to accept the idea that his father wouldn't return home.

Jumping forward almost 10 years, Corbin spoke with a student from Rutgers University about that tragic Tuesday in September. The university was conducting a project where they interviewed children of the September 11th victims. In his interview, he told the story of finding out about the terrorist attacks and his father's death. However, the more miraculous information that he gave came many years after that traumatizing day. In the years after Corbin's father was killed in the attacks of September 11th, 2001, he experienced trauma and great sadness. Corbin was put on medications for depression, focus and anxiety. He became rebellious at home and went through a stage of bad lying. He even cheated on tests in school and got caught, but denied the cheating. He became reclusive, locking himself in the basement of his home spending hours on the computer chatting with his friends and being uncooperative with his new step-father. His

mother even went through a period where she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Corbin then told the interviewer that he came to a turning point in his life. He decided that he needed to start growing up and preparing for college and the rest of his life.

Since the 2001 tragedy, Corbin has graduated from Towson University and obtained a degree in something that was so important to him, sports management. His relationship with his father and their passion for sports influenced the desire to obtain his degree in sports. Sports have brought a sense of comfort to Corbin's life because they represent the time that he valued with his father. His father guided him on which teams to pull for, taught him to play catch and supported the teams he played on when he was a child. Therefore, Robert and his passion supported most reasons that Corbin had for pursuing a degree in sports management. During college, Corbin weaned himself off of the medications that he was taking for depression because he felt he didn't need them anymore. He felt that taking himself off of something that he didn't need was a step towards maturity. With this maturity he began to value his time and his life. Corbin also ventured out socially and joined a fraternity while he was in college. Corbin's father left behind a legacy of courage, compassion and perseverance. This memory of his father inspires Corbin with motivation and determination to make his late father proud of him and the life he's made for himself despite the tragedy and loss that he's experienced.

References

Lilonsky, J. (2011, September 08). *Young man faces tough road in coping with loss*. Retrieved from http://tri.gmnews.com/news/2011-09-08/Front_Page/Young_man_faces_tough_road_in_coping_with_loss